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ABSTRACT

Although education, as an activity mandated, sponsored, and supervised by the capitalist state, is as much an apparatus of the state as any other state agency, it is far more democratic, open to change and innovation, and subject to potential community control than any other state apparatus. To understand education's function in a capitalist society, it is necessary to emphasize that capitalist education, like the capitalist state, has a dual character. On the one hand, capitalist education provides means to contribute to the reproduction of the capitalist system, either as a tool to enlarge capital accumulation and labor force reproduction, or as an instrument which enhances political domination structures, practices, and codes. On the other hand, education is forcefully expressing the notion of national sovereignty and civil society's demands upon the state, e.g., people's expectations toward greater social mobility. Thus, at the same time that capitalist education is in strong correspondence to the social organization of labor and to the social relations of production, it constitutes by itself a moral and an empirical expression of democracy in capitalist society.
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POLITICAL POWER AND POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION
Toward a Political Sociology of Educational Policy-Making.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the issue of political power and policy making in education. Since the notion of political power should not be separated from the notion of the capitalist state, subsections two and three thoroughly discuss the class character of the capitalist state with particular regard to the effect a concrete institutional structural state configuration might have on public policy formation. Four main hypotheses on this topic are set forward. Subsection fourth discusses capitalist education and its links with the capitalist state. This subsection is a theoretical and abstract approach to the relationship between political power and policy-making which is oriented more toward outlining a theoretical framework than analyzing a concrete process of educational policy formation.

2. THE CAPITALIST STATE AND PUBLIC POLICY FORMATION

A common thread that runs through Marxist and Marxist-influenced educational research is the analysis of education as part of the state-administered reproduction of fundamental societal relations (Broady, 1981:143). Although the question of state-education relationships is at the core of the definition of education's functions in capitalist societies, it has rarely been thoroughly analyzed in contemporary Marxist theory. Questions concerning the capitalist state and its class-based proceedings, state impingements on educational structures, practices, codes and especially educational policy-planning and policy-making still lack good theoretical understanding and appropriate methodological procedures for their study.

To study public policy formation, it is necessary to concretely identify the institutional apparatus of the State and who directly controls it. This identification process has been the subject of much theoretical controversy. One crucial area of this controversy has been the notion of state interventionism in civil society. In contrast to the classical liberal state, interventionism seems to be the outstanding original feature of states in advanced and semi-peripheral societies (Cardoso, in Martins, 1977: 209). Reciprocally, another crucial area in the controversy concerns the relative autonomy of the state which also has been marked by polemics between 'instrumentalist' versus 'structuralist' Marxist theories of state-society relationships¹. A more recent area of theoretical interest is state intervention in the economy. As Poulantzas argues, a particular function of the State is to serve as a factor of cohesion between the levels of a social formation; however, in doing so, the State is also the structure or instance in which the contradictions of the various levels of a social formation are condensed (Poulantzas, 1969). Therefore, the relative autonomy of the State, as Skocpol points out, expresses the notion that the formulation of state goals and the state's capacity to implement these goals are not simple reflections of the demands or interests of social classes, factions of classes or groups. Thus as a factor of cohesion, the capitalist state,

¹ It is not necessary here to present a detailed summary of these controversies between both approaches. Let us just to point out that the so-called 'instrumentalist' approach emphasize and systematically analyze the links between the ruling class and the capitalist state, while the structural context of those links and interactions remains considerably understated (Gold D et al, 1975: 36-38). The 'structuralist' approach on the contrary, study systematically the way that state policies are determined by contradictions and limits of the system of production of commodities, and therefore, the instrumental action of the State is of secondary priority. The Poulantzas-Miliband debate gives sustenance to these two rather opposite paradigms (see New Left Review, issues No. 58, 59, 82 and 100).

as reflected through its policies is synthesizing in long-term planning the goals of economic and social reproduction of capitalism as a system despite the sectorial or factional short-term needs and disputes of individual capitalists (Skocpol, 1982: 7-28).

As several authors have emphasized, state intervention in civil society has become a crucial feature of the state which takes different forms in different countries. The function of various public institutions which maintain ideological hegemony has been modified. This in turn has had various consequences in the development of class consciousness. The increasing internationalization of capital has modified the framework in which state economic and social policy is performed. The structure of labor force and the relationships between classes has been changed by the enormous growth of the public sector. The social category of bureaucracy has become a social force in itself and the policy-making process within certain forms of the state is subject to increasing bureaucratic encapsulation--while sometimes the bureaucracy is thought of as pursuing interest of its own. The interplay of interests among different factions of capital and of different classes and strata in society determines domestic as well as international policies. These policies have been increasingly reinterpreted and appropriated by a capitalist State whose autonomy has become absolutely essential in maintaining the system as a whole, particularly under conditions of necessity of consent and legitimacy enforcement.

3. STATE AUTHORITY IN LATE CAPITALISM AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING

Guillermo O'Donnell's studies have contributed to a great deal to the clarification of the distinction between a form of state and a political regime (O'Donnell, 1978a:3-38; 1978b: 1157-1199). Despite the ongoing discussion and controversy surrounding this topic, I propose here to consider the State: as a pact of domination and as a self-regulating administrative system. The state should be considered "the basic pact of domination that exists among social classes or factions of dominant classes and the norms which guarantee their dominance over the subordinate strata" (Cardoso, F H in Collier, 1979 :38).

With regard to the State as a self-regulating system, Claus Offe's analyses are highly relevant (Offe, 1972a; 1972b; 1973a; 1973b; 1974; 1975a; 1975b). Offe conceptualizes State-organized governance as a selective, event-generating system of rules, i.e. as a "sorting process" (Offe, 1974:37). In a similar vein, Goran Therborn identifies two main sources of determination of state policy formation: 1) the determinations which are originated at the level of the state power; that is, the specific historical crystallization of relations of forces condensed in a pact of domination which acquires expression in a set of policies concerning the productive process, and 2) the determinations originated in the structure of the state apparatus and the class bias of its organizational form (Therborn, 1980: 144-179).

The contribution of Claus Offe is an attempt to sort out this dual character of the State, and views the state as comprised of the institutional apparatuses, bureaucratic organizations and formal and informal norms and

codes, which constitute and represent the "public" and "private" spheres of social life. The primary focus then is neither the interpersonal relations of various elites nor the decision making process per se. Therefore, the class character of the State does not reside in the social origin of the policy-makers, the state managers, the bureaucracy or the ruling class, but in the internal structure of the State apparatus itself due to its necessary selectivity of public policy; a selectivity that is "built into the system of political institutions" (Offe, 1974: 37).

In summary, Offe's model of the capitalist state consists of four "empirically based" set of assumptions: 1) production and distribution of goods and services are essentially and eminently private (the commodity production and accumulation is done through private capital); 2) the survival and political effectiveness of the actors in the State apparatus depend upon resources derived from the private accumulation process; 3) thus, the state should promote the general accumulation process; and 4) the state personnel do not have a power basis of their own; therefore, they need a mandate through some form of mass participation in the selection of the state personnel. Notwithstanding, it is the self-interest of the actors in the state apparatus which to a large extent determines policy outputs (Offe, 1975a: 4-5). What, then, are the conclusions that can be drawn from this model?

This policy framework does permit the State to perform its principal functions which are: to execute a preventive crisis management, to determine a concentric system of priorities with respect to social needs, social threats and problem areas, and to devise a long-term avoidance strategy for

future threats and conflicts. In this regard, contradictions can no longer be plausibly interpreted as only class antagonism. They must, as Offe insists, be at least regarded as necessary by-products of an integral political system of control. To this extent, the fiscal crisis of the state, for instance, which appears to be the inevitable consequence of the structural gap between state expenditure and revenues, is at the same time a lively testimony and expression of systemic constraints.

The first hypothesis advanced here is that any mode of state intervention is linked to a changing pattern of threats, potential or actual, or to structural problems that emerge out of the process of accumulation of capital. Thus, the modes of state activity (which will be identified below), can be seen as responses to those social threats and problems (Wright, 1978:277; O'Donnell, 1978a; 1978b; Offe, 1975b: 137-147). In other words, modes of class struggle determine modes of state response and vice versa.

A further extension of this hypothesis would stress, essentially, a two-sided process. On one hand, class struggle shapes, in contradictory ways, the structure of the state. Reciprocally, the state's structures and policies shape class struggle. On the other hand, the form and content of state policies give shape to and are shaped by the form and content of the demands raised in the class struggle. (Esping-Andersen et al, 1976: 186-224; Therborn, 1980).

Considering the above mentioned fundamental parameters of state intervention, what remains to be clarified is the analytical distinction between modes of state intervention and methods of state intervention. The former refers

to state action vis-a-vis state expected functions under the logic of commodity production, while the latter refers to a somehow abstract analytical distinction which embraces those several state alternatives (methods) to choose from in the process of public policy formation.

The principal modes of state intervention can be divided into allocative modes and productive modes. Using allocative activities, the state creates and maintains the conditions of accumulation by means that simply require the allocation of resources which are already under state control (e.g. taxes, repressive forces, land, mass media). The productive mode represents state action which supplies a variable and a constant capital which the units of private capital were unable to produce. Beyond areas of competence or types of policies considered, what really does differentiate both modes is that the allocative mode is usually controlled and thereby reinterpreted by its inputs while the productive mode is generally controlled and thereby evaluated by its outputs (Offe, 1972a: 128).

The principal methods of state intervention are as follows: 1) state regulation through a set of positive and negative sanctions connected with a certain behaviour of social categories or classes, 2) infrastructure investment either as a partial or supplementary method to private capital activity (e.g. building roads, bridges, airports) or as a total method with which to reemplace private capital activity (e.g. the case of public mass compulsory education, law enforcement or the administration of justice; in these cases, the participation of private initiative is negligible in terms of the amount of investment and the degree of control of systemic outcomes); 3) participation which essentially means co-determination of policy-making

and policy-operation through consent building in decision-making bodies which incorporate several interest-corporate units.

Hence, considering these modes and methods, it is important to propose a second hypothesis regarding the process of policy formation. So far, it has been suggested that government's motivational force is the pursuit of an abstract systemic interest rather than any particular interest. This hypothesis should be carefully qualified for a historical-political analysis. It is important to distinguish between short-term, conjunctural processes and long-term, historical or organic processes. The Gramscian dictum is in this regard very insightful and clear:

"A common error in historical-political analysis consists in an inability to find the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural. This leads to presenting causes as immediately operative which in fact only operates indirectly, or to asserting that the immediate causes are the only effective ones. In the first case there is an excess of "economism," or doctrinaire pedantry, in the second an excess of "ideologism." In the first case there is an overestimation of mechanical causes, in the second an exaggeration of the voluntarist and individual element. The distinction between organic "movements" and facts, and "conjunctural" or occasional ones must be applied to those in which a regressive development or an acute crisis take place, but also to those in which there is a progressive development or one towards prosperity, or in which the productive forces are stagnant. The dialectical nexus between the two categories of movement, and therefore research, is hard to establish precisely" (Gramsci, 1980: 178).

Thus, to understand whether a single policy decision derives mostly from a structural, organic determinant or whether it primarily results from a conjunctural one, it is essential to analyze and interpret the dialectical relationship between subtle and open factors operating beneath public policy formation.

A third working hypothesis regards the aforementioned distinction between form and content in the production rules of public policy. First of all, it would never be expected to find a situation in which a stated intention of a policy and its actual outcome will faithfully coincide. Even though at first glance this point seems to be a trivial one, nonetheless it prevents a formal comparison between the state's alleged goals and the practical results. In general, such a comparisons are too formal and generic to be worthwhile. Therefore, there will always be a gap between what is declared, what is implemented, and what is the actual policy outcome.

As a result of these theoretical explorations, the fourth hypothesis rejects the notion of the state as simply a problem-solving agent an approach that in general places too much emphasis on the analysis of policy content. The main assumptions of this common approach to policy making are: a) the state seems to be analyzing those processes which occur in the political arena, and through a diagnosis of the chief problems, organizes its political agenda for action; b) from this standpoint, it is important for researchers to focus upon which interests are involved in the determination of policy-making; c) as soon as this identification is been done, the corollary of the analysis will be to check those interest against the material outcomes and the distribution of tangibles benefits which result from policies and implementation (Lindblon, 1968: 12-13). In general, these shared assumptions are used in the basic approaches to policy-planning in education in such areas as the estimation of social demand, man-power planning, and rate-of return and cost-effectiveness analysis (Russel and Hudson, 1980: 1-15; Weiler, 1980; Simmons, 1980: 15-33).

Thus, as Goran Therborn has shown, the organizational studies of the state apparatus and policies becomes a central concern for a Marxist analysis. The range of matters considered by Therborn (1980: 37-48) is represented in the following schematic list:

1. inputs mechanisms 1.principles regulating the type of task dealt with by the state; 2.criteria of personnel recruitment to the state apparatus; 3.modes of securing state revenue;
2. processes of transformation 4.modes of decision-making and handling of tasks; 5.patterning of organizational positions and of relations among their incumbents; 6.modes of allocation and utilization of material resources;
3. output mechanisms 7.patterning of decisions and practices of the state; a)toward other states, b)toward the society of which is part; 8.patterning of relations of the state personnel: a) with the personnel of other states, b) with other members of the same society; 9.modes of outflow of material resources from the state.

4. EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING AND POLITICAL POWER: A PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The main assumption of this research is that education, particularly the schooling system, has a broad correspondence with the hierarchical capitalist division of labor. Thus, under the current form of production--which represents a response to the needs of the bourgeoisie to increase the amount of labor that can be gotten from workers, to pay lower wages, and to prevent work disruptions and conflicts--education plays an important role.

Indeed, the process of bourgeois domination needs to develop a framework of political alliances that includes some sectors of the subordinate classes--e.g., the petty bourgeoisie. In order to assure the stability of the political system, there should be a process of political legitimation of the state toward the civil society. In this area, education again plays a very important role.

Time and again, the reproduction of capitalist society is related to the reproduction of social forces and the reproduction of relations of production. The latter is carried out, according to Poulantzas, in two complementary instances: first, through the qualification and determination of those who are objects of the reproductive system; and second, through the distribution of agents in preexisting positions in the labor market (Poulantzas, 1969: 32).

This process would imply the production and reproduction of work habits (punctuality, obedience, respect for authority, self-initiative, and sense of personal responsibility) (Bowles et al, 1975 : 6-16), the sharpening of concrete cognitive skills of workers, the provision of general knowledge and learning skills necessary for carrying out the complex technocratic framework of modern production, and ultimately, the production and diffusion of class consciousness (the rules of the game, or ideology). As Bowles so nicely puts it:

"The wage worker, whether in the factory, plantation or office, has to learn time-consciousness, new forms of discipline, new sources of motivation, and respect for authority outside the kinship group. He or she has to adjust to detailed supervision in highly routine and fragmented tasks" (Bowles, 1980: 214).

Indeed, these activities are a target historically assumed by socialization and educational factors, mainly done through concrete educational institutions. This strong association of the transmission of knowledge within the system of public schooling seems to be a child of the Twentieth Century.

These processes of correspondence between the production and diffusion of knowledge and capitalist social relations notwithstanding, there are several sources of contradictions in the educational process. These contradictions emerges from the very nature of the process of mediation. As in the capitalist state, in order to be a legitimate institution of labor preparation and social role assignment, schools have to give the appearance of autonomy from the economic base. This appearance of autonomy is, however relative, to a large extent real autonomy, as it has been insightfully emphasized by M. Carnoy and H. Levin in a forthcoming book. (Carnoy M. & Levin, H. forthcoming, chapter 8).

From this relative autonomy of the school system emerges a particular kind of contradiction and from the above mentioned process of correspondence emerge different kinds of contradictions. In the school system, Carnoy and Levin have identified five main sources of contradiction: 1) the school as a promoter of political ideology; 2) the school as an agent of social equality; 3) the school as an agent of social mobility; 4) the school as an institution of cultural development; and 5) the relative independence of the educational bureaucracy from the capitalist enterprise.

In the correspondence process, there are three sources of contradictions:
1) the effects of structural or internal contradictions in the schooling

system itself (e.g. conflict among bureaucracy); 2) the school as a place of work for teachers and administrators, with a struggle over wages and work conditions; and 3) the school as a producer of socialized labor, with its own class struggle between teachers/administrators and working class students (Carnoy M. & Levin, H. forthcoming: chapters 2-7).

In summary, from a Marxist or a radical theoretical perspective, educational institutions have been viewed as a versatile apparatus which contributes to the political legitimation of the status quo, to the reproduction of social relations of production, to the political culture and political consciousness-raising, and to nationhood building. Education has been seen very often as a prerequisite for human capital formation and capital accumulation or as educational reforms which happen to be either real outcomes of struggle within the state apparatus or as a process of social transformation and cooptation of any alternative societal practices--in order to prevent a radical change at the fundamental levels of social relations of production (Carnoy, 1975; Carnoy and Levin; 1976).

Therefore, the main concern is to critically assess the process of educational policy-making in a capitalist dependent state. A preliminary answer to this question will be to offset distinct analytical dimensions such as:

- a) the State's goals and policy targets--the social history of the state apparatus;
- b) modes and methods of operation in educational policy formation;
- c) the extent and type of bureaucratic organization;
- d) the educational bureaucracy's ideologies contained in policy-planning--as internal determinants of policy-making;
- e) material and non-material policy outcomes;
- f) the role of educational policy within the overall State public policy;
- g)

and the struggles by groups and social classes to resist the hegemonical practices of the the capitalist state. However, if they are somehow inserted within the State apparatus, the task will then be to study how they have tried to consolidate positions or even to enlarge them.

Due to the capitalist division of labor, the role of education is seen as related to the cultural and socialization dimensions of social life, regardless of the fact that educational institutions, policies and practices have multiple implications at the economic and political instances.

Henceforth, it is possible to suggest that education contributes to the process of social reproduction in two rather different analytical ways. First, education does contribute to the process of capital accumulation and to the socio-economic exploitation of the labor force. This is accomplished through labor force training and role assignment and the production of knowledge (science and technology) which could expand the rhythm, intensity and productivity of capital and capital investment. Second, education does contribute to the process of social and political domination. This political role of education does not mean, however, that education ought to sustain and reinforce an explicit pact of domination, but that capitalist education ought to support the very existence of a capitalist pact of domination.

Summing up, educational institutions seem to contribute to several parallel processes such as: nationhood building, consensus formation, cognitive legitimacy and the legitimacy of the hierarchical division of labor within society, and last but not least, formation, diffusion and reinforcement of false consciousness.

Education as an activity mandated, sponsored and supervised by the State is as much an apparatus of the State as any other State agency. However, one can hardly understand education's function in capitalist society--education plans and programs, codes, practices and policies--unless one emphasizes that capitalist education, like the capitalist state, has a dual character. On one hand, capitalist education should provide means to contribute to the reproduction of the capitalist system, either as a tool to enlarge capital accumulation and labor force reproduction, or as an instrument able to enhance political domination structures, practices and codes. On the other hand, education is forcefully expressing the notion of national sovereignty, and civil society's demands upon the State. That is to say, people's consciousness and their expectations toward greater social mobility, the attainment of higher personal skills with which to achieve better positions in the labor markets, or the organized efforts seeking social, economic, and political democratization.

Thus, at the same time that capitalist education is in strong correspondence to the social organization of labor and to the social relations of production, it constitutes by itself a moral and an empirical expression of democracy in capitalist society. This is visible in the demands already institutionalized in any system with compulsory massive public education, largely bearing on a State's rhetoric of equity and equality in education. In this sense, almost every single educational site is far more democratic, open to change and innovation, and subject to potential community control than any other State apparatus or the working place. Education is potentially, and in some sense actually, far more democratic than any other juridical and political instance of a capitalist mode of production.

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